

Man, This Enemy

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homemade means they can devise. Production comes first, ⁵⁶⁵
even at the price of using up the machines. Discipline is ⁴⁶⁶
severe; negligence or even a few minutes' lateness are
strictly punished. No wonder, then, that the bad side of
the system outweighs the good in the worker's mind. Still,
he dares not complain. If he betrays any signs of discon-
tent the security police, whose secret agents are his co-
workers and sometimes his friends, takes care of him.

The wildcat strikes that break out from time to time ⁵⁶⁵
no threat in themselves, for peace returns quickly ⁴⁶⁸
after mass arrests of all participants. They are, however,
ominous signs that discontentment has reached a tension
that can find release only in desperate acts. A strike re-
quires a certain minimum of organization. That is why
nothing else makes Party dialecticians so uneasy. The
workers are the only class capable of organized action—
that Marxist principle has never been forgotten. No ac-
tion, however, is possible without leaders. If the leaders
reason correctly, that is, if they understand the necessities
of the historic process, then the workers as a mass will be
unable to protest.

Everything, thus, takes us back to the question of mas- ⁶²⁶
tery over the mind. Every possible opportunity for educa- ⁵³⁵
tion and advancement is offered to the more energetic and
active individuals among the workers. The new, incredi-
bly extensive bureaucracy is recruited from among the
young people of working-class origin. The road before
them is open, open but guarded: their thinking must be
based on the firm principles of dialectical materialism.
Schools, theaters, films, painting, literature, and the press
all shape their thinking.

We should also call attention to a new institution, the ⁵⁷⁵ •
"club," whose significance is comparable to that of the ⁶²⁶
chapel in the middle ages. It exists in every factory, ev-

- 575 ery school, every office. On its walls hang portraits of
626 Party leaders draped with red bunting. Every few days, meetings following pre-arranged agendas take place, meetings that are as potent as religious rites. The Catholic Church wisely recognized that faith is more a matter of collective suggestion than of individual conviction. Collective religious ceremonies induce a state of belief. Folding one's hands in prayer, kneeling, singing hymns *precede* faith, for faith is a psycho-physical and not simply a psychological phenomenon. Edward Gibbon, describing the effects of Theodosius's decrees forbidding pagan rites (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XXVIII), says: "The devotion of the poet, or the philosopher, may be secretly nourished by prayer, meditation, and study; but the exercise of public worship appears to be the only solid foundation of the religious sentiments of the people, which derive their force from imitation and habit. The interruption of that public exercise may consummate, in the period of a few years, the important work of a national revolution. The memory of theological opinions cannot long be preserved, without the artificial helps of priests, of temples, and of books. The ignorant vulgar, whose minds are still agitated by the blind hopes and terrors of superstition, will be soon persuaded by their superiors to direct their vows to the reigning deities of the age; and will insensibly imbibe an ardent zeal for the support and propagation of the new doctrine, which spiritual hunger at first compelled them to accept." The Party has learned this wise lesson from the Church. People who attend a "club" submit to a collective rhythm, and so come to feel that it is absurd to think differently from the collective. The collective is composed of units that doubt; but as these individuals pronounce the ritual phrases and sing the ritual songs, they create a collective aura to which they

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in turn surrender. Despite its apparent appeal to reason, 575 •
the "club's" activity comes under the heading of collec- 626
tive magic. The rationalism of the doctrine is fused with
sorcery, and the two strengthen each other. Free discussion
is, of course, eliminated. If what the doctrine proclaims is
as true as the fact that 2×2 equals 4, to tolerate the opin-
ion that 2×2 equals 5 would be indecent.

From his first day in school, the young citizen receives 826
an education based on this truth. There is a great differ- 876
ence between schools in the people's democracies and
schools in the West, for example the schools I attended in
pre-war Poland. My friends and I were exposed to a dual 829
system of values. Mathematics, physics, and biology taught
us scientific laws, and inculcated respect for a materialis-
tic outlook inherited from the nineteenth century. History
and Letters seemed to elude scientific laws, while the his-
tory of the Catholic Church and Apologetics cast doubt,
though often naïvely, on what physics and biology taught.
In the people's democracies, the materialistic outlook of
the nineteenth century has been extended consistently to
every subject; history and every branch of human crea-
tivity are presented as governed by unshakeable and *al-*
ready known laws.

In the nineteenth century, with the rise of literacy,
brochures popularizing scientific theories made their ap-
pearance. Regardless of the intrinsic worth of these theo-
ries, we must grant that from the moment they take on a
popular form they become something other than what
they were as hypotheses of scientific research. For ex-
ample, the simplified and vulgarized version of Darwin's
theory of the origin of species and the struggle for exist-
ence is not the same concept that it was for Darwin or
for his scholarly opponents. It takes on emotional color-
ation, and changes into an important sociological element.